



BY THE HOUSE OF DELEGATES,

MARCH 2, 1868.

Read and 200 copies ordered to be printed.

By order,

MILTON Y. KIDD,

Chief Clerk.

STATEMENT

OF THE

SUPERINTENDENT

OF

PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

IN REPLY TO AN ORDER OF THE

HOUSE OF DELEGATES.

ANNAPOLIS:

WM. THOMPSON, OF R., PRINTER.

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PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

FOR THE YEAR 1867-68

HOUSE OF DELEGATES

ANNAPOLIS:

W.M. THOMPSON & SONS, PRINTERS.

STATEMENT.

STATE OF MARYLAND,
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION,
SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE,
BALTIMORE, FEBRUARY 28, 1868.

To the Honorable,

The House of Delegates :

In reply to your order that the Department of Public Instruction report "the reason of failure of funds to conduct the Schools through the year in several of the counties," the following statement is respectfully submitted:

The Public Schools were open during the year ending June 30, 1867, the whole scholastic term of 10 months in 13 Counties. In one County, Cecil, 9 months. In 6 Counties, Carroll, Dorchester, Harford, Kent, St. Mary's, Washington, $7\frac{1}{2}$ months, making an average of 9 months for the entire State.

The law of 1865 provided two sources of School income. A State tax of 15 cents per \$100 distributed among the counties according to population between the ages of 5 and 20 years, and a county tax to be determined by each county.

In the counties which did not "conduct the Schools through the year," either a local tax was not levied, or levied, and appropriated to building and repairing School Houses; but even in these counties, Schools were open longer than the 6 months required by law.

It ought to be gratifying to every friend of education, as it is honorable to the State, that public sentiment favors a continuance of Free Schools through the whole year. This is essential to any "thorough and efficient system," reaching all classes of children. Young children in the rural dis-

tricts cannot attend School during the winter. The larger boys and girls are working at home during the spring and summer. Therefore, if Schools be in session only half the year, one class of pupils or the other will be deprived of education.

The following table shows that notwithstanding the lack of a local tax in several counties, the Free Schools of Maryland, during 1866 and 1867, were open longer than in any other State having a Free School system :

In Maryland Schools were open	-	-	-	9	1-10 months.
“ Maine “ “	-	-	-	5	7-10 “
“ Massachusetts “ “	-	-	-	7	6-10 “
“ Vermont “ “	-	-	-	6	“
“ Connecticut “ “	-	-	-	7	5-10 “
“ Pennsylvania “ “	-	-	-	5	6-10 “
“ Ohio “ “	-	-	-	6	3-10 “
“ Michigan “ “	-	-	-	6	2-10 “
“ Indiana “ “	-	-	-	4	3-10 “
“ Illinois “ “	-	-	-	6	5-10 “
“ Wisconsin “ “	-	-	-	5	5-10 “
“ Iowa “ “	-	-	-	4	“

Making an average of 6 2-10 months in 12 States, while the Schools in our own State were open more than 9 months.

During the current School year the sessions, in a few Counties, will be shortened, because the law authorizing the local tax expired December 31, 1867, and was renewed only for Allegany and Baltimore Counties. The School Commissioners have, in some instances, feared financial difficulty by the termination of the present School law before the whole levy of School tax for 1867 has been distributed, and have preferred to close the Schools rather than assume any risk.

This Department has advised that the Schools be conducted as long as the full revenues of the year will allow, understanding that some plan will be adopted by the General Assembly to prevent financial embarrassment.

From this statement it appears that “ the reason of failure of funds to conduct the Schools through the year ” are—

First—That in some of the counties the County Commissioners did not levy the local tax authorized by the law of 1865.

Second—The General Assembly did not enact a General Law authorizing the levy of a local tax for the support of Schools longer than the six months provided for by the State 15 cent tax.

Third—That the General Assembly of 1867 did not enact

local School tax laws for those counties which, by popular vote, had consented to such taxation, except in the case of Allegany and Baltimore Counties.

All of which is respectfully submitted.

L. VAN BOKKELEN,

State Superintendent of Public Instruction.

The following communications were received from the Presidents of the Boards of School Commissioners of these counties which have not conducted the Schools through the year, in response to inquiry from the Superintendent, made after receipt of the order of the House of Delegates. No responses have been received from Carroll or St. Mary's Counties.

The failure of funds to continue the Schools the whole year in Carroll is because of there being no local School tax. The answer from St. Mary's may be delayed by irregularity of mails.

ALLEGANY CO.—J. M. SHOBER.

This county never has had funds enough to continue its schools more than two terms.

This year it was thought to be for the interest of the county to use only the amount of the State Fund for Instruction, and the amount of County Fund for building purposes.

The first and second year the funds received from the State and county were used to carry on the schools.

With the increase of schools, pupils and teachers, it is plain that the terms must necessarily be shorter until the whole county can be supplied with houses which can be done in two years more; then, probably, schools can be continued in Allegany three terms.

Our Board tried to shape its work so as to meet any and all the acts of our present Legislature; for should the present system close with the last of March, and our schools be kept open two full terms, the Board could not meet its obligations to the teachers, from the fact that part of the State Fund as well as the County Fund, would not be due us, and would be diverted from the present system. Should the present system be continued until July, our Board will then be able to meet all of its obligations contracted during the 1st, 2d and present year.

We receive our funds in four payments, but when our schools are continued Fall and Winter terms, our liabilities amount nearly to the sum total of the amount due us for the entire school or fiscal year. Previous to this year the amount

needed to meet all claims at the close of the Winter term, the Board readily obtained from the banks. The banks have refused to favor us as heretofore until the Legislature by its acts, say that our system shall continue until July; then all the funds needed can be had.

CECIL CO.—F. A. ELLIS.

The answer to the inquiry from the Legislature so far as Cecil county is concerned, is very simple and direct.

The schools, as Public Schools, have closed for want of funds, consequent upon the repeal of the law authorizing a county tax for school purposes.

By the repeal of that law by the Act of 1865, in conformity with the provisions of the Constitution of 1864, forbidding local taxes for school purposes, we have suffered a loss of \$16,000; the county tax for school purposes being at the rate of 20 cents on the \$1.00. Our means for supporting the schools in Cecil county for the year 1867-8, have therefore been confined to our proportion of the State tax and the Free School Fund. The consequence has been that with obligations resting upon us for buildings absolutely necessary, we have only been able to keep the schools open for the Fall and Winter terms. A general law at the last session giving discretion to the County Commissioners to levy such additional sum as might be ascertained and certified by the School Board would have relieved us. But the Legislature either doubting its ability to pass such a law, or for other reasons failing to do so, we are without the means of continuing the schools beyond the two terms.

DORCHESTER CO.—JAS. L. BRYAN.

My financial report for year ending June 30, 1867, will show that the funds were *not* sufficient to keep the schools open during the entire year. In 1867 the total number of schools was *fifty-two*. An average cost of \$400 per annum for all expenses of the school, would have required \$20,800, while the receipts from all sources, with balance of \$1,588 22 left from preceding year, amounted only to \$16,539 79. By continuing the fifty-two schools for *three* terms we incurred a debt of \$1,060 30, to be paid from the levy of the present year.

The county appropriation of \$4,000 per annum expired by law January 1, 1867, and the whole amount of this levy had been appropriated by the Board to the erection of school-houses. Contracts for the building of *ten* of these houses have been made, and *six* are *now* used by the schools, the other *four* will soon be under our control.

FREDERICK CO.—LEWIS H. STEINER.

Your letter dated 19th inst., asking me to communicate "the reason for the failure of funds to conduct the schools through the year" in Frederick county, is herewith acknowledged.

I enclose the Treasurer's statement of all funds that have come into his hands during *this* school year, by which you will perceive that the Board was in debt for the Winter term \$2,330 70, and that the March apportionment (being all they can expect if their term of service shall expire by the Constitutional limitation) will only pay this debt and enable the Board to continue the schools until the 28th of February.

DR. *Joseph M. Ebberts, Treasurer, in account with the School Commissioners of Frederick County.*

1867.		
Aug. 31	To cash from County Collector and Teacher's Certificates.....	\$27 50
July 13	To cash from Free School Fund.....	4,823 44
Oct'r 14	" " State School Tax.....	9,016 32
29	" " Estate of Robert Shafer...	500 00
1868.		
Jan. 15	" " State School Tax of 1867.	7,398 97
	To deficit in Treasury at meeting, February 5th and 6th, 1868.....	2,330 70
		<u>\$24,096 93</u>

Joseph M. Ebberts, Treasurer, in account with the CR. School Commissioners of Frederick county.

By amount paid on account 1866 and 1867.....	\$1,276 15
" accounts of Fall Term, ending Nov. 15, 1867	10,783 35
" " Winter " " Jan. 31, 1868	12,037 43
	<u>\$24,096 93</u>

Estimated cost of schools for month February.....	\$4,720 56
Deficit in Treasury.....	2,330 70
	<u>\$7,051 26</u>
Estimated apportionment for March.....	7,398 97
	<u>\$347 71</u>

The county levy of \$5,000.00, which was made for 1865 and 1866, was not made for 1867. Add to this the deficit of last year, amounting to \$1,276.15, (occasioned by the necessity of paying \$1,627.23, old indebtedness of certain school districts, and it will be seen that the School Commissioners will receive during the present school year at least \$6,276.15 less than during the last school year.

HARFORD CO.—T. S. C. SMITH.

The reason why there is a failure of funds to conduct the schools of Harford county through the entire year is simply this :

The refusal of the County Commissioners to levy a local or county tax to meet the deficiency caused by the withdrawal of all tuition fees. If one dollar per term had been paid by each pupil, or had a corresponding amount been collected by direct taxation, the schools could have been conducted the entire scholastic year. The School Board, however, learning from the County Commissioners that no direct or local tax would be levied to meet this deficiency, determined to make the best they could of a bad bargain. They first determined, at the suggestion of the President of the Board, to compel each school to meet its own incidental expenses, so that the entire school fund might be applied to the payment of "Teachers' salaries."

At the suggestion of another member of the Board it was determined to keep the schools open but three terms, knowing that even then our Teachers would be very poorly paid for their time and labor.

In your published report it is correctly stated that the average cost of each school in Harford county for three terms, is \$233 45, and hence for one term \$77 81, which is certainly a very small salary for competent teachers.

But divide the whole cost, \$233 45 by 4, and we have \$58 33 as the average salary per term—a sum too mean to secure the services of a good farm-hand.

All intelligent persons must approve the course the Board pursued in this matter, knowing that even a tolerably good school *one* term is better than a bad school *four* terms.

Had the effort been made to conduct all the schools required the whole four terms, with the amount of funds at command, the better class of teachers would have declined their appointments and sought other occupations ; thus leaving the schools either entirely vacant or what is perhaps *worse*—under the control of those grossly incompetent to teach. I will further state that every effort has been made.

to economize our scanty funds; no office expenses are incurred. The County Commissioners, with the consent of the late Judge, and also of the Hon. Judge Bateman, appropriated to our use the room in the Court House designed for the Judge's Office. The greater part of the expense also for stationery and stamps incurred by the President of the Board in official duties, he himself has met without remuneration.

I make these statements to show that all the business of our Board has been transacted on the most economical scale.

KENT CO.—HOWARD MEEKS.

Yours of the 19th inst., reciting the order of the House of Delegates calling "for the reasons of the failure of the funds to conduct the Public Schools through the year in the several counties," came duly to hand.

Upon the introduction of the new system an indisposition on the part of the people to contribute anything whatever to the support of the schools was almost universally shown.

This feeling doubtless originated in the fact that the State School tax of fifteen cents in the \$100 was higher than the County School tax had usually been by three or four cents in the \$100.

Nearly all the school houses greatly needed repairs; in nearly every one new stoves were indispensably required; added to this the sum of two thousand and eighty-five dollars was absorbed in the payment of claims arising under the system previously in operation.

Under these unpropitious circumstances, the School Board looked with hopeful confidence to the County Commissioners, as they thought they had a right to do, for relief.

The School Board claimed that until January 1st, 1867, the local law authorizing the levy upon the county for the schools of \$5,250 was operative; the County Commissioners held a different view until June or July, 1867, when their opinion was changed, but being a Court of special jurisdiction, were unable to retrieve their error.

With the \$10,500 which this levy would have given the School Board for the two years, (1865-6,) our schools could, I think, have been kept in operation nearly or quite ten months in the year. As it is they have been kept open ten months in 1866, and seven and a half months in 1867.

My answer, therefore, to the inquiry in the order, is that the funds failed to conduct the schools through the year because, of themselves, they were insufficient even to pay in

full the salaries of the teachers, to say nothing of the debt of the previous system, of repairs, stoves, fuel, and minor unavoidable incidental expenses.

WASHINGTON CO.—THOS. A. BOULLT.

In response to your inquiry for information with reference to this county, I have the honor to say that “the reason for the failure of funds to conduct the Schools through the year” is because there are *not funds enough*.

There being no county levy, and the State tax being insufficient to conduct them any longer, the Schools were closed the 31st of January.

